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HER VACATION.

Soft autumn winds were blowing
The plumed golden-rod
The aster's royal purple
Made pictures on the sod;

The spell of Indian summer
Lay o'er the pastures brown;
A shower of gold sand shim'ring,
The sunshine sifted down.

The men had finished harvest,
The threshing just begun.
The housewife still was busy
From sun around to sun.

I tasted crimson jellies,
As lucent rubies clear;
Then hinted at vacation—
"If I could go—next year!"

A look of wistful longing
Crept swift across her face.
She smiled and sighed: "I'm weary
Of staying in one place!

"My home grows dear and dearer,
I should be truly blest
If there were space for breathing,
A little time to rest!"

The next year came with harvest
And wealth of autumn's gold,
For brain and heart o-weary
Earth's fairest scenes unrolled.

Tranced by the spell, while turning
Cool pillows 'neath her head,
I bent to catch the mutter'd,
Half-conscious, words she said.

"I'm tired—so tired—I'm going!
I shall my journey take!"
"You're better, dear," I whispered.
"Live for your children's sake!"

Ah! mother love the wondrous!
What other force we've learned
Could backward from that journey
Her failing feet have turned?

Her glazing eyes were opened,
Her wan lips strove to smile:
"It's twenty years—to-morrow—
'Tis such a little while—

"Since Benny was a baby—
But then—God knoweth best!"
(Her breath came short and shorter.)
"I'm going now—to rest!"

—Margaret Sibley, in Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

"NOW, this is what I call ridiculous."

"What is ridiculous, Ned?" asked Grace, as her brother threw down a newspaper.

"Oh, the stories these newspapers tell. I've been reading about those burning forests up north, and here is one about people barely escaping with their lives from a house."

"I should think that might be very likely," said mother, who sat near.

"But in broad daylight?" said Ned. "It might easily be so at night."

"Even in daylight," said grandma, laying down her knitting. "Yes, indeed. I know, for I have seen it."

There was a look in grandma's eyes which told that her thoughts had wandered into a far-away past. Nett and Dorry exchanged glances which plainly said:

"There's a story!"

But they waited until grandma took up the knitting before stealing coaxingly near her.

"Where did you see a woods on fire, grandma?"

"And when?"

"And did you most get burned?"

"Please, grandma!"

"Yes," said grandma, with a smile. "I will tell you all about it. And if Ned is not too old to listen he will more easily be able to believe some of the stories he may see.

"When I was a little girl," she went on as the small company gathered within easy hearing distance, "we lived among great tracts of wood-land which have since been turned into farms and dotted with villages. My father had taken up some land and was clearing it as fast as he could. But there were many miles of the thick dark timber between us and the open country, with only occasional patches of cleared ground."

"Did you like living there, grandma?"

"Wasn't it fearfully lonely?"

"As to liking it, I didn't know of any other life, dears. And there were plenty of pleasant things about it. We went berrying and nutting. We gathered wild flowers and autumn leaves. We ran among the trees, as wild and happy as any squirrel among them. And, best of all, I suppose we were so busy as never to have time to ask whether or not we liked our secluded lives.

"We used, I and my little brothers and sisters, to go to a district school not very far from my home. There was always an early fall term to which only the children went, for the big boys and girls of the district were always working hard and could not be spared until winter set in. Then they went at their studies, and I am ready to say," grandma smiled, "that they accomplished as much in their short time as many a one to whom study time comes as a matter of course.

"Well, this season I am telling you of I was about the oldest girl in the fall term. In those days we had not so many studies as you children have, and we did things a little differently. Some of your ways," grandma pinched Nett's cheek, "seem very queer to me, you know. Spelling was made great account of. It was considered a disgrace for a boy or a girl not to be a good speller, and one who was especially good was talked of for miles around.

"All the last year I had been the best speller among the younger set. I was very proud of it, and not only I but my father and mother. I had got to thinking it a matter of course that no one could do as well as I.

"You may think, then, that I was taken down a little when a girl a year younger than I began crowding me very closely for first place in spelling. Her family had lately moved into the district, and Susan Blake soon showed that she had been as well taught as any of us.

"The teachers had a different way from yours of keeping account of the standing of pupils. The spellers all stood up in a class and the words were given out to them. When one missed he went lower, the one who spelled it correctly going above him. The best one, of course, soon got to the head, and then went to the foot to work up again.

"I couldn't tell you how annoyed I felt when I found that I was no longer looked upon as *the* speller of the class. It made me angry when Miss Parsons, our teacher, looked at Susan, as she had always before looked only at me, when a hard word was going down the class.

"You have often heard me speak, dears, of the danger of cherishing evil feelings in the heart. It is fearful to think how little fostering they need to make them grow and increase until they seem to cast out everything else. I speak from my own knowledge, you see —"

"Dear me!" interrupted Nett. "To think of grandma ever being a naughty girl."

"I am sorry to say," grandma laid a gentle hand on Nett's head as she went on, "that my jealousy of Susan grew until it seemed to come like a great black wall between me and everything which I used to enjoy. I would not play with her at our playhouse—made with acorn cup dishes and hollyhocks and elder dolls. If she came to where we swung in the vine swing I went away. Even at home my hateful feeling towards Susan pursued me. I was always afraid of some one saying something about my spelling so that I should have to tell that I was no longer the best one in the class.

"The day before the end of the term I happened to be in the schoolroom alone and a desire seized me to find out which of us really stood first.

"Miss Parsons' desk, with her report book in it, was always unlocked. I knew that it was forbidden to look into it, but I took it out and turned to the spelling page. Some one, you know, left off head every day, and as the class was small Susan and I would, of course, have a good many head marks. I had kept count of my own, but not Susan's.

"There they were, the rows of neat pencil marks to each name. My heart beat as I counted them. Yes—seventeen for Susan, sixteen for me.

"How my face burned with anger and disappointment. In a day or two all the neighbors would know that Polly Carter was no longer head speller. How could I bear it? What right had this other girl to come in and take my place.

"I made up my mind I would *not* bear it. Miss Parson's pencil lay there in the desk. I took it up and added two marks to my own row.

"But there was something else to be done. Miss Parson's always gave us a ticket when we left off head. I must have enough to match the marks, for we always took them home at the end of the term, and everybody in the district was sure to hear how many I had.

"I hunted in Miss Parson's desk until I found her tickets, and took two.

"Then I rushed out of the schoolhouse. Of course some one was always there first, and I had often been there alone before, but my guilty conscience now made me afraid to stay. I ran through the woods to a little spring which we were all fond of, and stayed there until I was sure it was school time.

"There had been a long hot spell, and the woods were as dry as tinder. To this day I never can walk over crackling twigs and rustling dead leaves without a picture of red tickets before my eyes. I did not dare to feel in my pocket until night, and then the tickets were gone.

"I had never gone to bed before with such a weight of wrong doing on my heart. I had never before lain awake long, but now those pencil marks and those tickets danced before my eyes until I thought I should go wild. In the darkness and in the hush all around of the lonely woods I saw exactly what I had done. I had stolen those tickets, and the marks were a lie. And it had been done to rob a companion of the credit which was justly hers. All growing out of my wicked jealousy and self-conceit.

"How could I undo it? Oh, if the mice would only gnaw Miss Parson's book before morning! (We were always troubled with mice in the old schoolhouse after the corn had been gathered.) If only a tornado would blow it away—or if it would burn up!—anything to hide what I had done. My only straight way out of it would be to go and tell Miss Parsons, but that I could never, never do.

"All day long Miss Parsons once in awhile went to the door and gazed about with an anxious face. We all knew why, for in our homes we had heard plenty of talk about the great forest fires which it was feared might come too near us. The sky was smoky, and the wind seemed like a blast from a furnace.

"The last thing in the afternoon was the counting of the headmarks.

"'One ahead for Polly,' said Miss Parsons, smiling at me. 'Our little girl keeps her place, and we are glad

I HUNTED IN MISS PARSON'S DESK.

of it because we know it is by faithful study.' Think of my listening to that, children! Then she said:

"'It is nice to have some one who keeps so near her as Susan. Such good scholars should be good friends. Let's see your tickets, Polly.' I was anxious to hurry away, but my little sister and some others gathered around me, insisting on seeing my many tickets.

"'Why, they don't count up,' cried little Ruth.

"'Is that so, Polly?' asked Miss Parsons. 'Could I have forgotten any day to give you your tickets? Of course you must have your right number to show to your parents.'

"'I—think I lost them down at the spring,' I stammered.

"'We'll go find 'em,' cried two or three little boys.

"'You may,' said Miss Parsons. 'We will wait here a little while and if you do not find them I will give Polly one more.'

"The sky had been getting darker and we began to hear a far away dull roar as if the wind was rising for a storm. Miss Parsons was setting her desk in order, but before long she said:

"'I wish those children would come back. I shall feel safer when you are all at home.'

"As she spoke she went to the door. I shall never forget the look on her face as she turned to us.

"'Come,' she cried, in a tone that made us jump. 'No—don't wait for bonnets.'

"With a few swift steps she had driven us all out. She came last leading the two youngest children. At the door we met the boys who had gone to the spring.

"'Oh, the fire! the fire!' they cried.

"We heard it louder, the roar—but it was not the roar of the wind.

"You think, perhaps, Ned, that a fire in the woods is something like one in the city, satisfying itself by feeding on one thing before it goes much further, especially if there are brave men to fight it. You think it quietly melts down a thicket, then leaps up a tree, taking things gradually and then going on to the next. But no one who has not seen it can imagine the awful rush with which a forest fire sweeps over acres upon acres, mile upon mile. Its own heat creats a blast which carries the blazing embers far ahead, to set going a new blaze; while acres will in a few moments be wrapped in a sheet of

RUNNING FROM THE FIRE.

flame, and it leaps over wide clear spaces in which men think themselves safe. The schoolhouse stood under a hill. The wind had suddenly changed, bringing the fire up on the other side and down upon us before we had dreamed of its being so near.

"'We must reach Carter's clearing,' I heard Miss Parsons say. 'Quick—quick!'

"She started on a run and we followed her like a flock of frightened sheep. How that hot wind seemed to catch our throats as we panted on. Sparks and embers began to fall around us. I had my sister Ruthie's hand. She was a solid little thing and hard to drag along. Jimmy Deane, one of the larger boys, took her other hand and we stumbled on, the smoke blinding and choking us. Ruth fell down and would not try to move—only moaned as we urged her.

"'Polly,' said Jimmy, 'it'll be either she or both of you—it's all we can do to get ourselves on —'

"'I won't,' I said. 'I'll stay if she does. Ruth—get,' I screamed. 'If you don't I'll whip you—I'll tell mother. I'll —'

"I stooped and pounded her—till—I think it must have been through sheer astonishment and fright at my treating her so—she struggled to her poor little feet. On we went, at last reaching my father's clearing, where we found half the neighborhood fighting the flames.

"It was a hard battle. Men and boys and women and girls stood with hands burned and blackened, with panting breath and scorched hair. No one knows how we might have come out of it but for the help of the Great Hand which alone can stay the march of a destroying fiend. At what seemed the moment of our last hope a few rain drops fell upon our smarting hands. With cries of joy and encouragement to each other we fought on, and before long came the blessed shower which saved many a forest home and many a life."

"Was Miss Parson's book burned?" said one of grandma's listener's, as she paused.

"And all the tickets?"

"Did anyone ever know what you did, grandma?

"Yes indeed, my dears. I had had my lesson. I had felt in my very heart that if it had not been for the delay about the tickets we should not have wasted those last precious minutes in the schoolhouse. If anyone had died I should have been a murderer. You may be sure that I did not hold on to the lie which I had brought through the fire. The first day we were all back in the schoolhouse, which was built by Christmas, for logs were plenty and cheap. I told my ugly story to all who were there to hear."

—Sidney Dayre, in N. Y. Examiner.

The right to be loved is one of woman's rights, universally accorded.

A CATTLE FUNERAL.

The "Wild Critters" of the Plains Mourn Their Dead With Violence.

To observe or participate in a cattle funeral, let the curious-minded go out upon the range, select some spot which is open and affords no obstruction to the view, and from which not a "critter" is in sight.

Having selected such a spot, let one of the aforementioned "critters" be brought quietly and secretly from a distance and without undue ostentation, as becomes poachers upon another man's range, let him be done to death. Let the offal be secreted where even the coyotes can not find it, and let the hide and flesh be carried carefully away. Then let the earth be thrown on the blood stains to hide all traces of disturbance and let all this be done so well that even the human eye can detect nothing that would reveal what had been done.

Then let twenty-four hours, or even less, pass, unless, indeed, there be cattle within a mile or less at the time of the slaughter. But for purposes of illustration suppose that twenty-four hours have elapsed.

Then suppose a bunch of 100 or 200 head of cattle come drifting down over the range to leeward of the spot where the slaughter of the day previous occurred. The leader of the bunch may be two or three miles, perhaps farther, from the scene of blood. Suddenly he commences to show signs of uneasiness. Though the grass be deep and luxuriant, he only feeds a few moments continuously, lifting his head and tossing his horns as if his enemy was near. Suddenly there is a strong puff of wind, and as the notrils of the leader inhale the air a transformation occurs like a flash of lighting. He halts, throws his muzzle into the air and then emits a most unearthly, prolonged, weird, moaning shriek or bellow. It is like none of the various noises made upon other occasions, but has a tone that is all its own and which is evidently well understood by the entire herd.

With another shriek, which can be heard for a mile and even farther, the leader breaks into a run, with his tail in the air and with his head shaking angrily from side to side, followed by all the members of the herd, each adding to the volume of sound that now fills the air. As other animals feeding quietly at a distance hear the peculiar sounds they, too, pick up their ears, then with answering shrieks they gallop wildly toward the excited band and join it in pursuit of the leader.

The animal quickly arrives at the tell-tale spot. He snuffs at the ground, meanwhile lashing his sides with his tail, and bellowing continually in a manner that suggests the height of rage. His eyes flash wildly, the froth drops from his jaws and flecks his neck and body. He paws the ground angrily with his hoofs, and by dexterous twitching manages to cast great masses of the earth into the air and upon his back.

The others come racing up and crowd closely about the spot where their mate was slain. An inner circle was formed by the excited animals, with their heads all pointing to a common center, and these bellow and paw the ground and race around and around until exhausted. Meanwhile, the others are circling rapidly about the central cluster, and finally displace the earlier arrivals, whereupon they, too, go through the same performance.

The scene is a terrible one. Horns are clashed against horns, the bellowing of the angry animals is deafening, the air is filled with dust, the beasts seem actuated each by some particularly malevolent spirit, and their actions appear prompted almost by human understanding.

Woe to the unfortunate curiosity seeker who chances to be abroad on foot upon such an occasion. If he have any "cattle sense" at all he will put as wide a space as possible between himself and the mourners, or if he be desirous of studying the spectacle he will climb the nearest tree or seek some other point of vantage inaccessible to the maddened beasts.

If, on the other hand, he should be so lacking in common sense as to be unable to recognize the apparent signs of danger and should approach too closely to the angry herd, his awakening to the peril will be sharp and sudden. Some angry beast will catch a glimpse of him and, recognizing in him the responsibility for the shedding of blood, will lower his head and, with a snort of defiance, make a wild charge for the object of bovine wrath. If that object escapes with his life he will, indeed, be fortunate. Even a horseman has been known to have had anything but a pleasant half hour from an encounter with a funeral party of this character.

The news of the death of a comrade seems to spread with the rapidity of the telegraph, and fresh relays of mourners constantly arrive, keeping up the strange spectacle for hours at a time, nor ceasing until the shades of night descend.

Occasionally the scene of bloodshed will be discovered by some wandering "critter" who has that portion of the range to himself temporarily. There may be no other cattle within two or three miles, yet the lone mourner will commence the procedure already described, and within a quarter or half an hour will have been joined by others, while inside of an hour there will be a dense mass of excited cattle on the spot, and from the range in every direction others will be seen hurrying to the scene.—San Francisco Chronicle.

The Price of Poetry.

There is a story told of a poor Greek poet who lived in Rome at the time of the Emperor Augustus. It shows us that wit often succeeds where merit fails.

The poet was anxious to gain favor with the emperor. Every morning he waited at the palace door, and as the emperor passed out, the poet presented him with a verse or an epigram which he had composed. The emperor accepted the poetry but never paid the poor poet anything. Indeed, his presumption rather amused the emperor, and, being one day in a merry humor, he wrote a verse himself and handed it gravely to the poet, who waited for him as usual at the gate.

The poet, with ready wit, pulled out his purse and emptied the two or three coppers it contained into the emperor's hand.

"Ah," cried he, "there should be more, but I give you of my ability. If I were as rich as you, great Cæsar, I would pay a much greater price for verses."

And it is pleasant to be told that the emperor thought the joke worth a thousand crowns. — Harpers' Young People.